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TAPS.

—— "*Our* ward fronts on the sea, and the night bugle-music is blown away on the sea wind, and comes back to us in sweet fragments. It is nine o'clock: the day, full of fear and hope, is ended; and while I write the sick men are all quiet in their little camp-beds. — A moment more, and the last bugle will sound, signal for silence and darkness. Now it begins, and the notes, rising and falling, say as plainly as music can say anything: 'Put it out; put it — out; put — it — — out!'

"It is a clear, golden call, almost a human voice, falling softer and slower to the end; and when well played, lingering a little at the last, like some one very cautiously hushing a baby to sleep," &c.

Part of a letter from U. S. Army Hospital.

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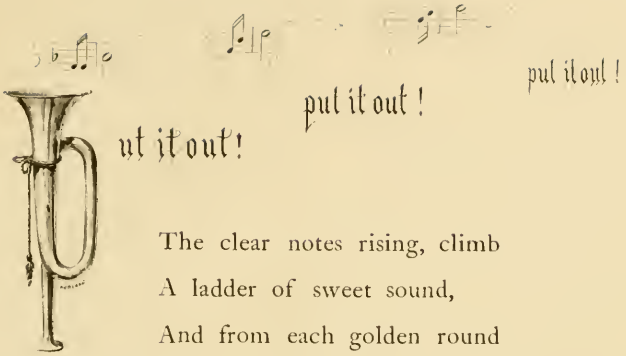
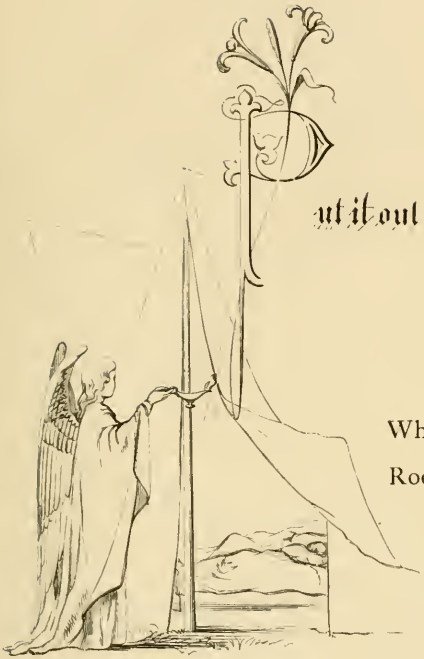


The clear notes rising, climb
A ladder of sweet sound,
And from each golden round
The ascending angels, nearing heaven, do chime
"God's watch begins, put your dim lanterns out!"

Put out each earthly light;
It is God's shadow falls
Along the darkening walls,
Closing us round, when men say "it is night:"
He draws so near it shuts the daylight out.



Put it out! put it out! put it out!

Forbear each scheme of ill;
Good angels walk the ward,
And heaven is all abroad
When twilight falls and Earth lies hushed and still;
Room for the angels! Put the dark deeds out.

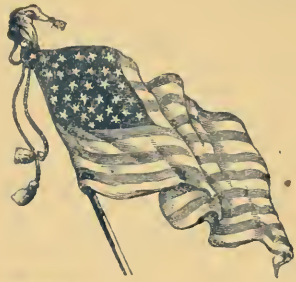
Put out all thoughts of care:
Rest gently, aching head;
He stands beside the bed,
Who brings in peace and healing, unaware,
And sends soft-footed Sleep to shut Pain out.

Put it out! put it out! put it out!

Put out — quite out — the light
Hark! as the notes grow faint,
Was that a new-voiced saint
Who climbed with them and scaled the starry height?
Has from among us any soul gone out?

God's love falls as a screen,
Where lights burn dim and pale,
No flickering flame shall fail,
For with His hand held steadfastly between
No wind can blow to put these life-lamps out.

Through Earth's long night He waits,
'Till to the Soul's glad eyes,
Filled with divine surprise
Heaven opens wide her golden morning gates:
Then, Day being come, He breathes the candle out.



[illegible]

You asked me, little one, why I bowed,
Though never I passed the man before?
Because my heart was full and proud
When I saw the old blue coat he wore;
The blue great-coat, the sky-blue coat,
The old blue coat the soldier wore.

I know not, I, what weapon he chose,
What chief he followed, what badge he wore;
Enough that in the front of foes
His country's blue great-coat he wore;
The blue great-coat, the sky-blue coat,
The old blue coat the soldier wore.

Perhaps he was born in a forest-hut,
Perhaps he had danced on a palace-floor;
To want or wealth my eyes were shut,
I only marked the coat he wore;
The blue great-coat, the sky-blue coat,
The old blue-coat the soldier wore.

It mattered not much if he drew his line
From Shem or Ham in the days of yore;
For surely he was a brother of mine,
Who for my sake the war-coat wore;
The blue great-coat, the sky-blue coat,
The old blue coat the soldier wore.

He might have no skill to read or write,
Or he might be rich in learned lore;
But I knew he could make his mark in fight,
And nobler gown no scholar wore
Than the blue great-coat, the sky-blue coat,
The old blue coat the soldier wore.

It may be he could plunder and prowl,
And perhaps in his mood he scoffed and swore;
But I would not guess a spot so foul
On the honored coat he bravely wore;
The blue great-coat, the sky-blue coat,
The old blue coat the soldier wore.

He had worn it long, and borne it far;
And perhaps on the red Virginian shore,
From midnight chill till the morning star,
That worn great-coat the sentry wore;
The blue great-coat, the sky-blue coat,
The old blue coat the soldier wore.

When hardy Butler reined his steed
Through the streets of proud, proud Baltimore,
Perhaps behind him, at his need,
Marched he who yonder blue coat wore;
The blue great-coat, the sky-blue coat,
The old blue coat the soldier wore.

Perhaps it was seen in Burnside's ranks,
When Rappahannock ran dark with gore;
Perhaps on the mountain-side with Banks,
In the burning sun, no more he wore
The blue great-coat, the sky-blue coat,
The old blue coat the soldier wore.

Perhaps in the swamps was a bed for his form,
From the seven days' battling and marching sore,
Or with Kearny and Pope, 'mid the steely storm,
As the night closed in, that coat he wore;
The blue great-coat, the sky-blue coat,
The old blue coat the soldier wore.

Or when right over, as Jackson dashed,
That collar or cape some bullet tore;
Or when far ahead Antietam flashed,
He flung to the ground the coat that he wore;
The blue great-coat, the sky-blue coat,
The old blue coat the soldier wore.

Or stood at Gettysburgh, where the graves
Rang deep to Howard's cannon roar;
Or saw with Grant the unchained waves
Where conquering hosts the blue coat wore;
The blue great-coat, the sky-blue coat,
The old blue coat the soldier wore.

That garb of honor tells enough,
Though I its story guess no more;
The heart it covers is made of such stuff,
That coat is mail which that soldier wore;
The blue great-coat, the sky-blue coat,
The old blue coat the soldier wore.

He may hang it up when the peace shall come,
And the moths may find it behind the door;
But his children will point when they hear a drum,
To the proud old coat their father wore;
The blue great-coat, the sky-blue coat,
The old blue coat the soldier wore.

And so, my child, will you and I,
For whose fair home their blood they pour,
Still bow the head, as one goes by
Who wears the coat that soldier wore;
That blue great-coat, the sky-blue coat,
The old blue coat the soldier wore.

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